

SAINT MARK'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

the EPISTLE

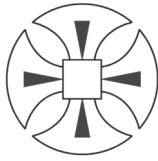
A Monthly Newsletter of Saint Mark's, Columbus

January 2025

● Issue 308



***Reflecting back ...
Looking forward***



SAINT MARK'S CLERGY AND STAFF

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Vestry meetings occur every first Tuesday of the month in the Canterbury Center. Meetings are open to parishioners. Meeting minutes are available online at: www.saintmarkscolumbus.org/vestry-meetings.

The Epistle is the monthly newsletter of Saint Mark's Episcopal Church. The deadline for submissions is the fifteenth day of the preceding month. Send photos, announcements, or story ideas for inclusion in the Epistle to: communications@saintmarkscolumbus.org.

EPIPHANY HOUSE BLESSING

There is an old practice of blessing homes at Epiphany and chalking the top of the door to remind us that everyone who comes in brings the light of Christ with them and that as we go out into the world, we carry the light of Christ with us.

Chalk is used in this service as an ordinary substance made of common elements of the earth, put to holy use. Chalk will not permanently mar the dwelling. As its image fades from view over time, those who participated in its original placement will remember it and the purpose for which it was intended. In doing so, they may rededicate themselves to that purpose. After a year passes and a new Epiphany arrives, they will have the opportunity once again to celebrate the themes of this season and once again to seek God's blessing on their homes and on those who come and go through its doors.

Pastor Vicki is offering to come to your home and lead the short prayers of blessing and mark the lintel over the front door of your home with chalk on Epiphany – Jan. 6. You can also say the prayers and chalk the door yourself.

The writing over the door is traditionally the year and the initials C, M and B in memory of the traditional names of the three Magi who visited Jesus. As a reminder for us to seek the presence of Christ when we go out of the door. The mark looks like this 20+C+M+B+25.

If you would like to have your house blessed for Epiphany (with or without the chalking), please sign up on the Sign Up Genius link on the front page of Saint Mark's website.



WORSHIP AND MUSIC

Taizé Service

The “Service of Light” is one of several options for Evening Prayer in the Episcopal Book of Common Prayer.

The language and order of the service is a nice complement to a style of worship that is distinctive to the ecumenical monastery community of Taizé, in the Burgundy region of France.

Taizé services feature simple song and chant, scripture readings, silence, and meditation, enriched by a contemplative atmosphere that includes iconography, candles, and an intimate setting.

The music of the Taizé tradition favors simple, accessible melodies that are meant to be sung and repeated by all, providing a frame for meditation on the divine.

Saint Mark’s traditionally has a Taizé service at the beginning of the Epiphany season.

This year, the Taizé service will be Sunday, Jan. 5 at 5 p.m.



Some members of the Saint Mark’s Choir joined in Littleton’s first anniversary celebration.



Brown Bag Sermon

At the 10:30 a.m. service, on Jan. 5 Pastor Vicki will be doing a Brown Bag sermon.

The way this works is that all children and youth are invited to bring something to put in a brown bag at the front of the church.

Pastor Vicki has to use everything in the bag in her sermon.

There are a few rules:

Nothing alive.

Nothing sloppy or messy (put your slime in a jar before putting it in the bag)

Nothing that will injure Pastor Vicki as she picks it up (like knives)

Look around, be creative and bring something for the bag.

The items put in the bag are returned after the sermon.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING

by Michele Johnson

If you have ever been in another country or among people speaking another language, you understand how isolated you can feel. We have a number of foreign visitors and new residents in central Ohio. Our Migration Ministry at Saint Mark's continues to host the Cultural Arts Fair with people from many countries and also has a close relationship with two families (through CRIS, the Community Refugee and Immigration Services) as they transition into our community.

Other opportunities include becoming "conversation partners" with refugees, immigrants, and foreign visitors to Ohio. I have been involved with two such programs, one through the Upper Arlington Library and one through CRIS. Both groups are always looking for volunteers to participate in their programs.

At the Main branch of the Upper Arlington Library, there is a group of volunteers who meet with English as a second language learners to help them improve their English. All branches of the library are currently providing these weekly one to one and a half hour programs. At the main branch, there is a teacher for the group once a month. She has presented lessons such as pronunciation, grammar, and idioms in the last three months. During the other three weeks, we American volunteers each meet with three or four of the visitors or new residents in small groups and just talk. For instance, if they want to practice past tense, we can discuss past events. We discuss families, holidays, shopping, cooking, our faiths, and even political systems. Many of the participants are here with their families while their husbands are teaching, studying, or doing research. I have met women who have law degrees, engineering and other science degrees, as well as English teachers in their own countries. Many are balancing raising their families and studying or working on their own while living in a foreign country. The women I have had the opportunity to meet are from Taiwan, Korea, Nigeria, Congo, Mexico, Turkiye, Japan, and Central America to name a few.

They all have different stories, but the program allows them to meet others who are new to this country and to practice their English while making friends. I am so impressed with their command of the English language and their desire to improve their conversational skills. We are fortunate to live in an area with Ohio State University and international businesses which draw families from other places. We can learn so much from getting to know our new neighbors.

*She and her children arrived here
from a refugee camp in Ethiopia
where she and her grandmother had
fled when she was just six years old*

Through CRIS, I have volunteered as a conversation partner with a Somali woman for the last five months. When I met her, she and her three children had only been in this country for two months. I thought we would be conversing one on one but more at the level of the library program. Instead, we were at the "beginning English" level. I have very much enjoyed getting to know my conversation partner. I met her this summer before her children had begun school. She and her children arrived here from a refugee camp in Ethiopia where she and her grandmother had fled when she was just six years old. She is such a dear, hard-working, and friendly young mother. We began with basic English such as greetings, days of the week, and ways to complete applications for children's school and for work. I had fun thinking of ways to communicate as we learned together. I did learn how to greet her in her language, but she has learned much more English than I have learned of her language. We communicated through pictures, drawings, and gestures at first. She is very eager to learn more English and participates in the online classes offered by CRIS as well.

OUTREACH & SOCIAL JUSTICE

I remember when she made her first “joke,” and I was thrilled. We enjoy learning, talking, and laughing together. My conversation partner is now working part-time. I know she is happy to be working. She told me almost from day 1 that getting a job was her goal.

Her days begin at 4:30 a.m. when she arises to fix her three children a large and hearty breakfast. (I’m still blissfully asleep at that time!). The children rise at 6:15 a.m. to dress, eat, and get ready for school. She is now working in an after school capacity at the children’s school from 3:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

I am so pleased to be getting to know my conversation partner and to provide some help in her English studies. I truly feel blessed.

Since most of our ancestors came to this country as immigrants, I feel strongly that welcoming our newest residents and visitors is extremely important. They are coming here just as our families did - or a better life with opportunities to work and live in a safe environment. We gain as much, if not more, from getting to know them, as they learn from us.

If you are interested in either the library or CRIS program for helping with English language learning, you can ask me (Michele Johnson, michelebjohnson@gmail.com)

or contact:

Cas Chermer, Programmer Adult Department, at the UA Tremont Library, cchermer@ualibrary.org,

or

Flannery Rokeby-Jackson, Volunteer Coordinator at CRIS: frokebyjackson@cris-ohio.org



Thank You, Saint Mark’s

The Cookie Walk raised \$1,165 for NNEMAP

The Giving Tree for the NNEMAP Christmas Shop took all of the following to NNEMAP:

83 items of clothing

14 items of sports equipment

100 books, toys or games

13 miscellaneous items

and \$775 in gift cards, including \$475 in gift cards purchased from the youth group.

We also sent \$390 in gift cards purchased from the youth group to Star House for homeless teenagers and young adults.

Thank you all so much for your generosity.

OUTREACH & SOCIAL JUSTICE

Annual Cookie Walk

By the time you read this, the cookies will be gone but the money raised from the Cookie Walk will continue to assist Outreach with the projects it coordinates on behalf of the congregation. This year we raised \$1,165 due to your generosity. Thank you to everyone who donated and/or purchased cookies, and to all those who let Outreach “keep the change.”



Migration Ministries

The next meeting of Migration Ministries is Jan. 28 at 7 p.m. on Zoom. Please contact Elizabeth Anstaett (Oxford4234@aol.com) for more information or to be sent the Zoom link.

On Thursday Dec. 5 at 6:30 p.m. members of Migration Ministries toured the Festa ESL program at the Upper Arlington Lutheran Church at Mill Run in Hilliard. Interesting volunteer opportunities are available. If you'd like to learn more, attend the Jan. 26 Summit or contact Elizabeth Anstaett (Oxford4234@aol.com) for information.

Mark Your Calendars—Outreach Events

Diapers and Spices packing	Jan. 8
Outreach Summit	Jan. 26,
Migration Ministries Meeting	Jan. 28

NNEMAP Food Pantry

Happy New Year! The year 2024 was a busy one for NNEMAP. The pantry broke a record for families served – nearly 60,000 including home deliveries of 8,500, and 3,000 families used the refrigerated lockers. NNEMAP's delivery program is the largest in Central Ohio and it is the 6th largest pantry out of 250 in Central Ohio. In 2024, NNEMAP distributed 1.8 million pounds of food.

NNEMAP had several successful fund raisers in 2024 – Top Golf, Taste of German Village, Harmony for Hunger Concert (198 paid attendance) and silent auction (\$15,335) and the Christmas shoppe (gifts for 1,400 children).

Like other pantries, NNEMAP is seeing a decrease in monetary donations and an increase in food prices. But the need is not decreasing. Below is an excerpt from a New York Times article titled 'No One should go hungry in America' Dec. 8.,

Food insecurity is defined by the US Department of agriculture as a lack of access to enough food for an active and healthy life. More than 13% of Americans - 47 million people experienced food insecurity in 2023; the rates are even higher in the black and Latino communities. In some of the poorest regions of America, mostly rural areas in the South, food insecurity among children is as high as 48%. But it is present in every county in the country.

No one should go hungry in our country, and Saint Mark's, by supporting NNEMAP in donations and volunteer hours, is making an impact on this crisis. If you are interested in volunteering or want to make a financial contribution, please go to NNEMAP's website: www.nnemappantry.org or contact Bill Karl – mrbill.karl@gmail.com.

New Outreach Project Ideas?

The Outreach Administration Committee will work on its 2025 budget this month, so this is the time to present any new projects for consideration. The Outreach Administrative Committee can be reached at Outreach@SaintMarksColumbus.org.

OUTREACH & SOCIAL JUSTICE

Diapers & Spices:

Our first diapers and spices packing day for the new year is Wednesday, Jan. 8, at 10 a.m. in the Parish Hall. Many hands make light work, so come and join the fun if you are available. No experience required! Please contact Marilyn Karl with any questions (mjkarl@yahoo.com).

The Giving Tree:

Thank you to everyone who so generously supported the Giving Tree. We were able to deliver lots of gifts to the NNEMAP Christmas store which were provided to the more than 1,000 children serviced by the store to make their Christmas a little brighter!

Street Church

On Dec. 29, Saint Mark's served the lunch at Street Church, taking our annual "Community Chili". Thanks to the volunteers who prepared chili, packed the lunch and helped serve. As usual, the chili was a big hit on a cold day with many of the participants coming back for second helpings.

We are starting to organize for Street Church meals for 2025. If you would like to participate with meal preparation, transporting or serving please contact Roberta Morton at notvmorton@gmail.com or see her at church. New volunteers are always welcome.

Outreach Contact Information

Questions about anything Outreach can be sent to the Outreach Administrative Committee at Outreach@SaintMarksColumbus.org.

January Outreach Summit

The next Outreach Summit will be held Sunday Jan. 26 following the 10:30 service.

Agenda topics will include an update on our current outreach projects, new volunteer opportunities, and the 2025 Outreach budget.



Mark Your Calendar!

- Jan. 5: Brown Bag Sermon
Youth Group
Taizé Service
- Jan. 6: Epiphany House Blessing
- Jan. 7: Vestry Meeting
- Jan. 8: Diapers & Spices
- Jan. 13: Evening Knitting Group
- Jan. 14: Contemplative Prayer Group
- Jan. 16: Daytime Knitting Group
- Jan. 18: Tourist in Our Hometown
- Jan. 21: Pub Theology
- Jan. 26: Outreach Summit
- Jan. 28: Migration Ministries

PARISH LIFE

January Adult Formation

In January the Adult Formation group will be looking at the stories of women in the Bible.

The January session will meet on Jan. 12, 19 and 26. Adult Formation meets on Sunday mornings at 9:30 a.m. in the parish hall.



Pub Theology

Pub Theology at 7 p.m. on the third Tuesday of the month. For a beverage, snack and conversation about God, the world, the church and any other topics you bring with you.

The January gathering is Tuesday Jan. 21.

During the winter months we will be meeting at Somewhere In Particular Brewery. It is located on Dierker Road between Henderson & Bethel Roads.

Pastor Vicki comes with some topics of conversation, but bring your own thoughts, questions or topics.

Annual Reports

The Annual Meeting will be Sunday Feb. 9. If you are part of a ministry or activity at Saint Mark's, start writing your annual report now and beat the February rush.

You can email your annual report to communications@saintmarkscolumbus.org

Tourist in Our Hometown

The next Tourist in our Hometown visit is to the Anti-Saloon League Museum in Westerville.

The Anti-Saloon League was one of the major organizations who which campaigned for the prohibition of the sale of alcohol. Their work culminated in the passage of a Constitutional amendment outlawing the sale of alcohol in the United States. They also were a force in reshaping the Postal Service because of all of the mailing that they did. The Anti-Saloon League had its headquarters in Westerville.

The Museum is located at the Westerville Public Library, 126 S. State Street in Westerville. We will meet at the Museum at 11 a.m. on Saturday Jan. 18 and explore the museum. There are a lot of restaurants in uptown Westerville if people want to grab lunch after exploring the museum.



Youth Group

Youth Group will meet on Sunday Jan. 5 after the 10:30 a.m. service.

This is our alumni meeting. All youth group alumni are invited back for the gathering.

We will eat, talk and play games, including some hide and seek.

TECH TIPS

Daniel Maldet with CMIT Solutions is Saint Mark's computer and tech consultant.

Tech Tips is an occasional column with advice and ideas for your own tech usage.

Passwords: Are they dead?

For decades, passwords have been the go-to way to secure our digital lives. They act as keys to access our online accounts, devices, and systems. But as the world becomes more connected, passwords have struggled to keep up. Cybercriminals can easily guess, steal, or trick users into giving up their passwords. Microsoft alone blocks over 7,000 password attacks every second, making it clear that passwords are no longer enough to keep us safe.

Passkeys are a new and better way to protect your accounts. Instead of relying on something you know, like a password, passkeys use something you have, like your phone or computer, and something you are, like your fingerprint or face. This combination makes it almost impossible for hackers to break in. Even better, passkeys are easier to use—you don't have to remember them, and signing in is faster and simpler.

For individuals, this means fewer headaches and better protection from phishing scams and data breaches. For small businesses, the stakes are even higher. A single stolen password can lead to costly attacks, including ransomware or stolen customer data. Passkeys offer a stronger defense, helping businesses avoid these risks and maintain their reputation.

Big companies like Microsoft, Google, and Apple are leading the way in making passkeys the new standard. Microsoft has already made passkeys available for services like Xbox and Microsoft 365, encouraging users to adopt them during account setup or password resets. By working together, these companies are ensuring that passkeys work smoothly across different devices and platforms, making the transition easy for everyone.

Some people might hesitate to switch to passkeys, thinking they're too complicated or unnecessary. But sticking with passwords comes with growing risks. Hackers are getting smarter, and password-only accounts are an easy target. By resisting the change, individuals and businesses leave themselves exposed to an increasing number of attacks.

Passkeys are not just about security; they also simplify our lives. Instead of juggling dozens of passwords, you can log in with just your face or fingerprint. For small business owners, adopting passkeys means stronger protection for both their operations and their customers.

While passkeys are a big step forward, they're not the end of the story. New technologies are already being developed to make online security even better. But for now, passkeys offer a safer, easier way to stay protected in an increasingly digital world.

If you'd like to learn more, reach out to Daniel Maldet with CMIT Solutions at dmaldet@cmitsolutions.com.

LIVING IN FAITH. GROWING IN LOVE. CELEBRATING GOD’S PEOPLE.

*O God, your unfailing providence sustains the world we live in and the life we live:
 Watch over those, both night and day, who work while others sleep,
 and grant that we may never forget that our common life depends upon each other's toil;
 through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

BIRTHDAYS

Elizabeth	Anstaett	Jan. 4	Laruen	Wolfe	Jan. 20
Wendy	Hauswirth	Jan. 4	John	Deliman	Jan. 20
Pat	Iams	Jan. 6	Audrey	Trotier	Jan. 22
Theodore	Warren	Jan. 6	Cindy	Anderson	Jan. 22
Maria	Bester	Jan. 9	Sarah	Lange	Jan. 24
Jackson	Handley	Jan. 9	Samuel	Grinstead	Jan. 25
Lukas	Skoracki	Jan. 11	Vincencio	Benito	Jan. 27
Hudson	Bohnert	Jan. 14	Molly	Iams	Jan. 29
Ellen	Berndt	Jan. 17	Frank	Zubovich	Jan. 30
Sally	Rechner	Jan. 17	Paul	Brower	Jan. 30
Robbie	Hurley	Jan. 17	Marilyn	Gille	Jan. 31
David	Boop	Jan. 17			
Lois	Sechler	Jan. 18			
Mark	Drew	Jan. 18			

PARISH PRAYER LIST

Joe	Steven, Katie and Caroline
Steve	Deliman
Sue Barna	Sylvia Martin
Marilyn Badger	Ted Carey
Patrick Hreachmack	Anna Dougherty

Prayer List Refresh

On the first Sunday of Advent we reset the parish prayer list.

If you have a new pastoral concern you would like to add, you may do so by calling the parish office at (614) 486-9452 or by emailing our office manager, Melanie Jacobs (officemanager@saintmarkscolumbus.org) or by submitting a request online at www.saintmarkscolumbus.org/prayer-request.

Watch over thy children, O Lord, as their days increase; bless and guide them wherever they may be. Strengthen them when they stand; comfort them when discouraged or sorrowful; raise them up if they fall; and in their hearts may thy peace which passeth understanding abide all the days of their lives; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Member Care

Saint Mark’s has an active member care ministry which provides meals to members who are recovering from illness or surgery, caring for a family member who is ill, welcoming a new baby, or just having difficulty making healthy meals themselves. Please contact Michele Johnson (micheleljohanson@gmail.com) if you know of someone who could use some help with meals or if you are interested in volunteering to help provide some meals.

Support Groups

Saint Mark’s provides meeting space for AA and Al Anon in the parish hall on the following days and times:

- Sundays, 8 p.m. AA Open Group
- Mondays, 5:30 p.m. AA Men’s Group
- Mondays, 7 p.m. AA Open Group
- Tuesdays, 9:30 a.m. Al Anon Group
- Tuesdays, 11 a.m., All Anon Small Meeting
- Thursdays, 6:15 & 8 p.m. AA Open Group

If you have a pastoral care concern or would like to add a name to the prayer list, you can do so by contacting Pastor Vicki at rector@saintmarkscolumbus.org, by calling the parish office (614) 486-9452. You may also add a name to our prayer list at www.saintmarkscolumbus.org/prayer-request.

For details on all services, meetings and events go to:
www.SaintMarksColumbus.org/Calendar

Worship and Formation		
Holy Eucharist Rite I: 8 a.m.	Sundays	Sanctuary
Holy Eucharist Rite II: 10:30 a.m.	Sundays	Sanctuary
Brown Bag Sermon at 10:30 a.m. service	Jan. 5	Sanctuary
Taize Service—5 p.m.	Jan. 5	Sanctuary
Adult Formation: 9:30 to 10:15 a.m.	Jan. 12, 19 & 26	Parish Hall
Children's Formation: 10:30 a.m.	Jan. 12, 19 & 26	Children's Formation Area
Epiphany Home Blessings	Jan. 6	Various Homes
Contemplative prayer: Tuesday, 6:15 p.m.	Jan. 14	Bishops Library
Sisters in Faith: Monday, 7 p.m.	Jan. 20	Canterbury Center
Pub Theology: Tuesday : 7 p.m.	Jan. 21	Somewhere in Particular
Rector's Day Off: all day	Fridays	
Parish Life and Vestry		
Youth Group: Sunday, after 10:30 a.m. service	Jan. 5	Parish Hall
Vestry meeting: Tuesday, 7:30 p.m.	Jan. 7	Canterbury Center
Daytime Knitting & Stitching: Thursday, 1 to 3 p.m.	Jan. 2 & 16	Canterbury Center
Tourist in Our Hometown: Anti-Saloon League Museum: 11 a.m.	Jan. 18	Meet at Westerville Public Library
Epistle Deadline for February issue	Jan. 15	
Evening Knitting & Stitching: Monday, 6:30 to 8 p.m.	Jan. 13	Canterbury Center
Canterbury Choir Practice, 4:30 p.m.	Wednesdays	Sanctuary
Saint Mark's Choir Practice, 7:30 p.m.	Thursdays	Sanctuary
Outreach Ministries		
Diapers & Spices: Wednesday, 10 a.m.	Jan. 14	Parish Hall
Outreach Summit: After 10:30 a.m. service	Jan. 26	Parish Hall
Community Events		
Cub Scout meeting: 5:30 p.m.	Tuesdays	Parish Hall



SAINT MARK'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

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See inside for a full calendar of events and gatherings and visit www.SaintMarksColumbus.org.

